

CHAP 6

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CASTLECRAG HOMES

PAGE 17-23

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CASTLECrag HOMES

*Illustrations in this Brochure show
types of residences designed for
erection or already built at
Castlecrag and Covecrag.*





VIEW OF COVECLAG FROM MAIN ARM, MIDDLE HARBOUR

TERMS:- DEPOSIT 10%, INSTALMENTS 5 YEARS AT 6%

GREATER SYDNEY

DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION LIMITED

35 BLIGH STREET (AT CASTLEBRIDGE CHURCH STREET) TELEPHONE B 3726



CASTLEBRIDGE ABOVE THE CLOUDS

Scenic Marine Suburbs of Middle Harbor



UNIQUE in beauty and design, the scenic marine suburbs of Castlecrag and Covecrag have brought the loveliness of Middle Harbour within easy reach of the City of Sydney.

On the completion of the Bridge over Sydney Harbour, this exclusive residential district on the shores of Middle Harbour will be only 20 minutes from the heart of the city. At present it is served by fast modern motor buses, running at short intervals to and from Milson's Point.

Castlecrag and Covecrag are the picked portions of that mighty amphitheatre which stretches down to the rocky shores, wooded coves and charming inlets of Sydney's finest reach of water. Designed to preserve all the remarkable natural features—outlooks, cliffs, caverns, trees, flowering shrubs, wild flower glades, waterfalls, fern valleys, foreshores, birds and animals—the covenant under which all lots are sold and homes built enforces town ideals of suburban development entirely novel to Sydney.

This Brochure is intended primarily to illustrate the landscape architecture which harmonises so admirably with its exquisite setting.

In its unspoiled grandeur Middle Harbour vies with the world-famous Riveria, Italian Lakes and Norwegian fiords. Other branches of Port Jackson have been marred by ugly gridirons of glaring red roofs and scarring streets, and the wonderful foreshores have been alienated and ruined.

Seeking the pathway of least resistance, the City of Sydney has pushed its crowded suburban chessboards to the very portals of the great stone and wooded heights which look across the Harbour to French's Forest and Manly—fortunately it has been halted there.



THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF THIS RESIDENCE AND THAT ON THE NEXT PAGE ARE TAKEN FROM HOUSES ERECTED IN A SIMILAR DEVELOPMENT SCHEME AT MASON CITY, IOWA (U.S.A.), THE CONTROLLING ARCHITECT BEING MR. W. B. GRIFFIN. THEY ILLUSTRATE TWO TYPES OF RESIDENCE SHORTLY TO BE ERECTED ON CASTLECRAG AND COVECRAG.



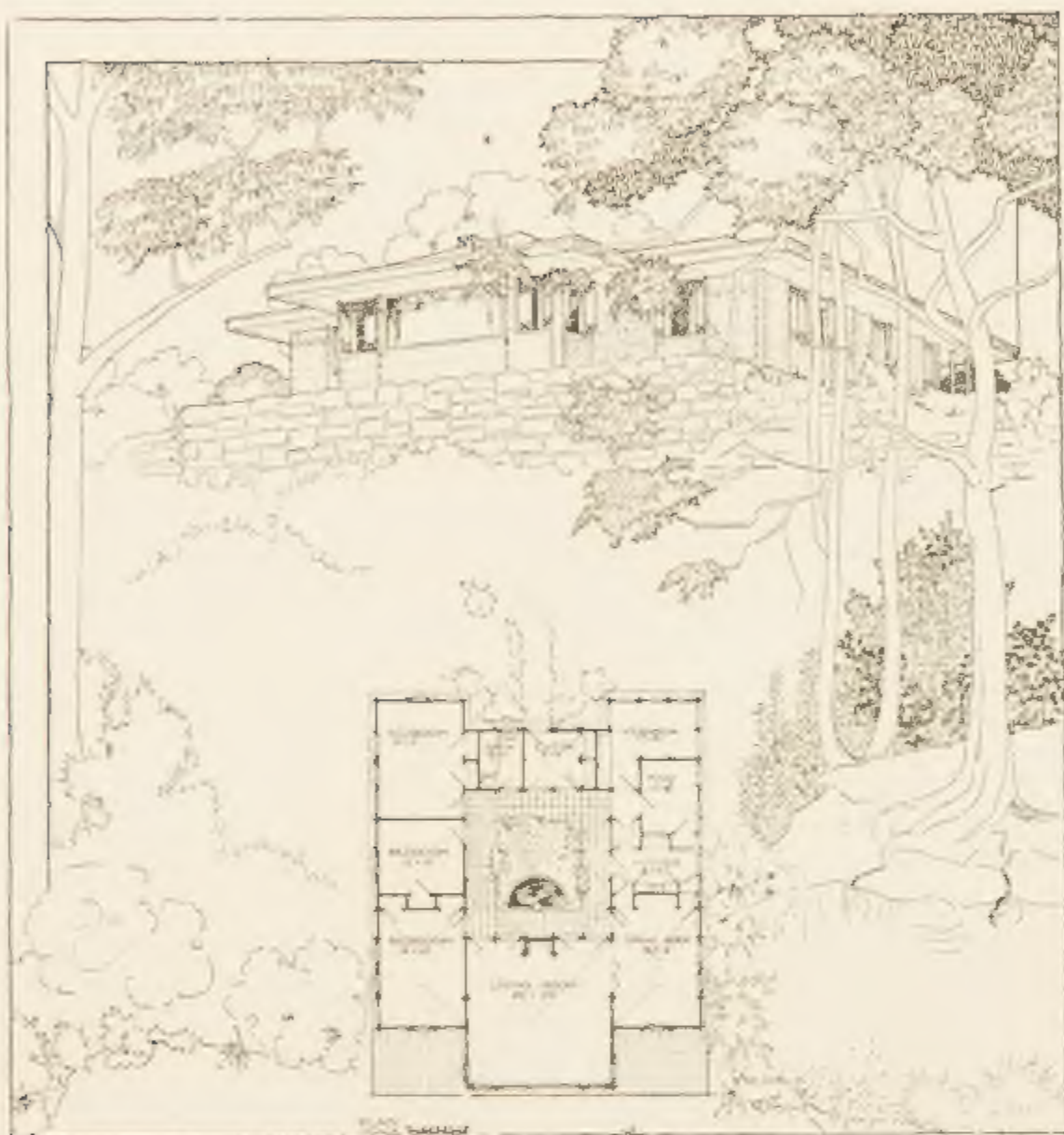
ENCLOSED COURT OF CASTLECRAG RESIDENCE. A DESIGN OF THE HOUSE ITSELF WILL BE SEEN ON PAGE SIX.

Some years ago the genius of Walter Burley Griffin, Architect and Town Planner, saw the amazing possibilities of the three virgin promontories on the western side of Middle Harbour, with their glorious four miles of water frontage. His enthusiasm inspired a group of Australian capitalists amongst his professional clients, and the magnificent amphitheatres passed into the hands of Greater Sydney Development Association Limited.

This is literally a case where the last is the best, for here is the only Harbour frontage free from the threat of commerce and quite out of the field of industrial expansion now in evidence in every other direction. It is the only water-side development that can, and will be, protected against flats.

Twice as high as the Sydney Observatory and the heights of the South shore of our Harbour, these narrow headlands





rise above the mists and possess the bright easterly seaward aspect sheltered from the bleak winds.

Their conformation in ledges is the ideal for successive tiers of stately homes, and the sandstone sub-structure of these ledges affords the most elegant of all building materials. It also constitutes a district free of ~~wind~~ and dust, also perfectly drained beneath as to water, and above as to cooling currents of air, so that the temperature and humidity are the most equable, even precluding frost—all the conditions for the best health.

Castlecrag, four miles from Circular Quay, is named from towering Edinburgh Rock. It has become a Scenic Suburb which surpasses any other in the Commonwealth, and ninety aesthetic dwellings in stone have been planned or erected.

Fifty thousand pounds have already been spent on modern roads which wind around the slopes and skirt the rocky ledges; they are almost invisible in the landscape, and are supplemented by picturesque lanes and small driveways.

Covecrag, on the second promontory, has been opened up by fine thoroughfares which present an even greater variety of harbour and forest views. This second scenic marine suburb is fast springing into being. Across a tiny inlet from it is the old world castle of Henry Willis.

The third and most northern peninsula, Castlecove, will await the rapid expansion which must follow the Harbour Bridge connection of North Shore with Sydney.

All the ideals and vision exemplified in Castlecrag are embodied in the second sister suburb—Covecrag—and the latter will have a most suitably placed municipal and shopping area. The rapid development of Castlecrag in the past three years will probably be more than paralleled by the rise of Covecrag.

As the dominant motif in both has been the preservation of primeval nature, emphasis may justly be placed on the treasures so carefully conserved.

The flora is diversified and rich, representing possibly the most multifarious collections in any country. Ironbarks, flowering gums, cypress pines, she oaks, pink tea trees, flannel





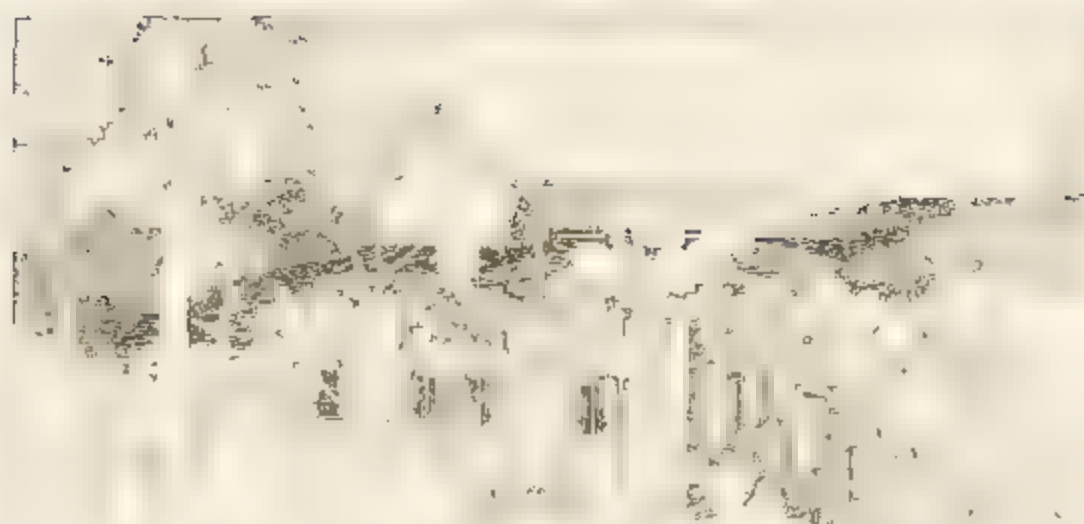
PLANTING AND LANDSCAPE DESIGN

flowers, waratahs, croweas, boronias, acacias, geebungs, wooden pear trees, scarlet bottle brushes, honeysuckles, grevillias and heather, brilliant masses of wildflowers—these are noted at random in a stroll through the trees. More than 500 choice native plants are yearly planted out from the nursery.

Below are the silver shore-fretted waters of Middle Harbour—widening in ovals, narrowing in horcs, with yachts and other pleasure craft leaving tiny barnished wakes. In the distance is the ocean beyond Manly. Castlecrag looks down on Sailor's Bay. Covecrag is above the main arm of the Harbour and Castlecove and Craig Cove. Sites for the future Yacht Club and for a deep shark protected bathing beach have been selected and set aside.

A plan has been approved for a scenic Marine Drive which will skirt the fresh shore between the Suspension Bridge and the Roseville Bridge, when the roads are connected up. The round drive will give twenty-four miles of perfectly graded enduring surface.

Superb examples of the skill of surveyor and landscape designer are afforded by the many highways through the vast estates. These have made easily accessible many heights and



THE ILLUSTRATIONS ON THIS PAGE AND THE NEXT PAGE SHOW TYPES OF TWO-LEVEL HOMES

valleys which at first must have seemed shut off from human habitation. At Covecrag, for instance, there is a gently sloping ascent—top-gear to any car—and on its summit the visitor can look down 330 sheer feet at a flawless panorama.

The thoroughfares are carved out of bed-rock and are finished in bituminous concrete or rolled blue stone asphalt with ample width for pedestrians and vehicles, with every now and again a circular terminal way to serve as halting place or turning point. So cleverly inlaid are the roads that when seen from above they have almost merged into the foliage through which they pass.

In order to provide short cuts embowered lanes intersect the main highways, thus facilitating movement from crest to waterfront.

As the services and utilities of all the homes are supplied from the rear of each, the roads are not disfigured by poles and wires nor is the splendid road surface continually dug up to provide conveniences for new homes.

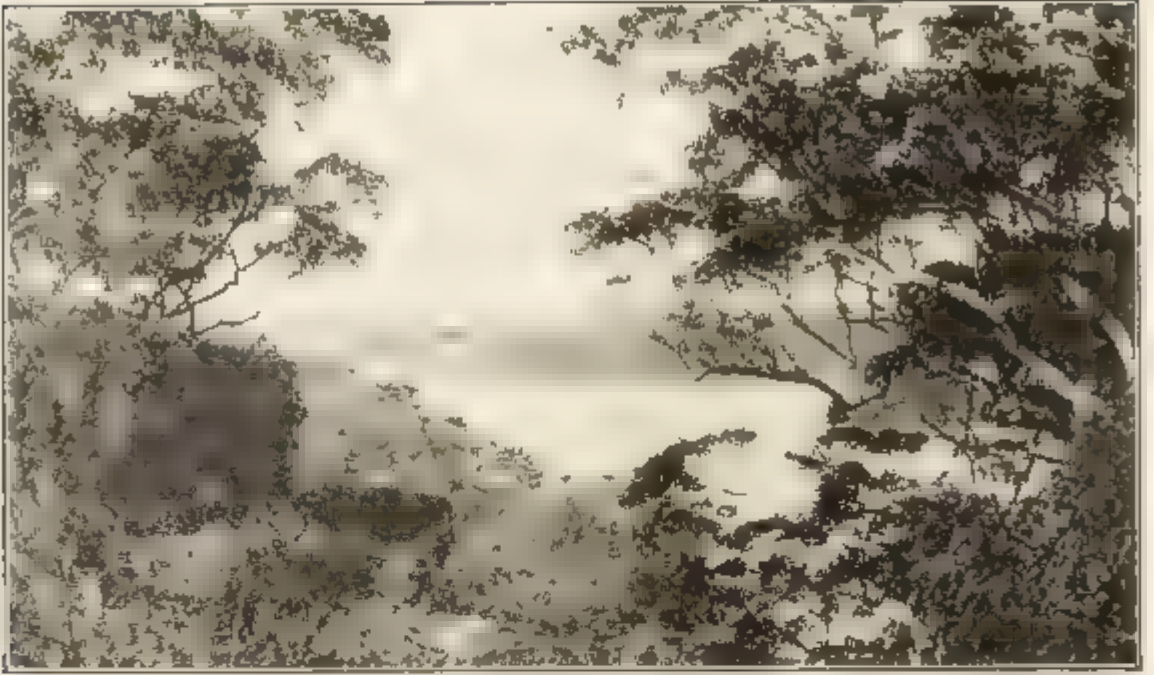
Ample public reserves have been made throughout Castlecrag and Covecrag apart from the innumerable small parks and playgrounds intended for the benefit of the houses immediately abutting. The gratifying way in which these little neighbourhood reserves are made to play their part in the creating of a community spirit will be touched on when considering social interests.

In keeping with the idea of a Castle (Castlecrag) the roads and public reserves in that promontory have been given appropriate names—such as the Surtle Fort and the Battlement in the case of highways and the Barrut and Keep in the case of reserves.

Other names suggest attractions peculiar to the areas. In the Gargoyle Reserve a rushing waterfall spouts out suddenly as it does in those old time fountains in which the mouth of a weird head serves as outlet. Half a mile of creek frontage gives its title to the Watergate and a rocky lookout characterises the Oriel. The Embrasure is surmounted by an overhanging ledge and forms a sheltered terrace with a parking place, playground and a waterfall and forest. Cool and restful, the Retreat is the bed of a sylvan valley.

Other reserves are distinguished by playgrounds, lookouts, pulpit rocks, grottos, cascades and glades.





MA LOR BAY SEEN FROM ASTIPORAG



ROAD UNDER CONSTRUCTION AT LUYE RAG



VIEW OF LAKE SUPERIOR FROM THE CAMP



VIEW OF LAKE SUPERIOR FROM THE CAMP

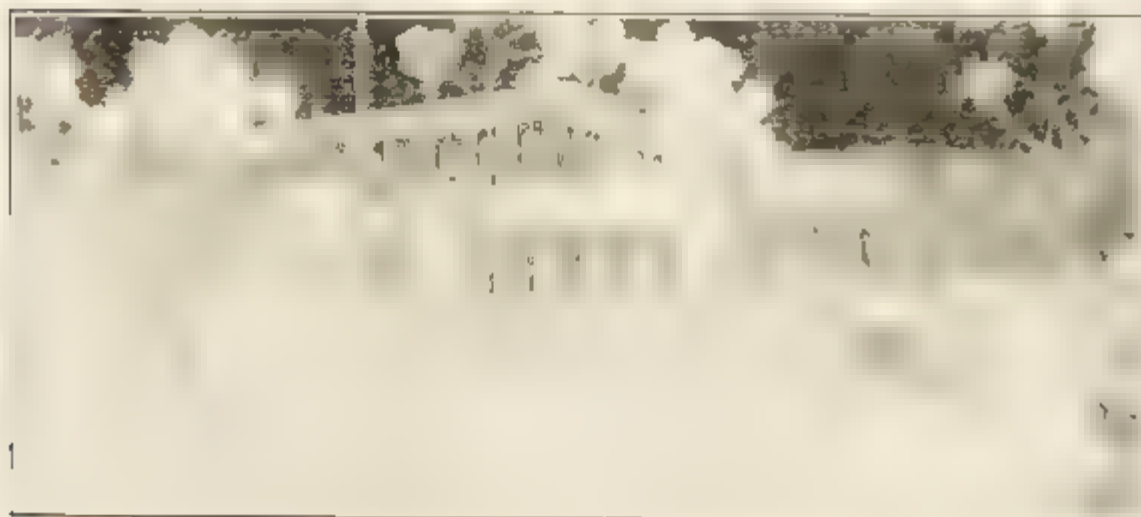


All the recreation reserves form a single system and are connected throughout by a network of pathways, passes and shaded lanes. They are designed to perpetuate the delightful rambles which were a feature of Castlecrag before its development. An incalculable asset has been the segregation of four miles of water frontage common reserve to all the lot holders.

Sports grounds, ovals, golf links, tennis courts, football grounds, open air theatres, etc., have been provided for by the wise foresight which has marked every detail of these
Suburbs of Middle Harbour

The golf links, which have been surveyed for construction, will offer a sporting course of 18 holes within five miles of the heart of Sydney. It is characteristic of the Company's determined idealism that tempting private offers to buy the land and lay out the links have been refused.

It was typical, again, of the new spirit that both Castlecrag and Covecrag should have been made sanctuaries of native life, vigorous protection being extended to the birds, opossums, possums, and soon it is expected native bears.



Community spirit is a rare and delicate plant but it has made vigorous growth at Castcrag and its roots are deeper every year.

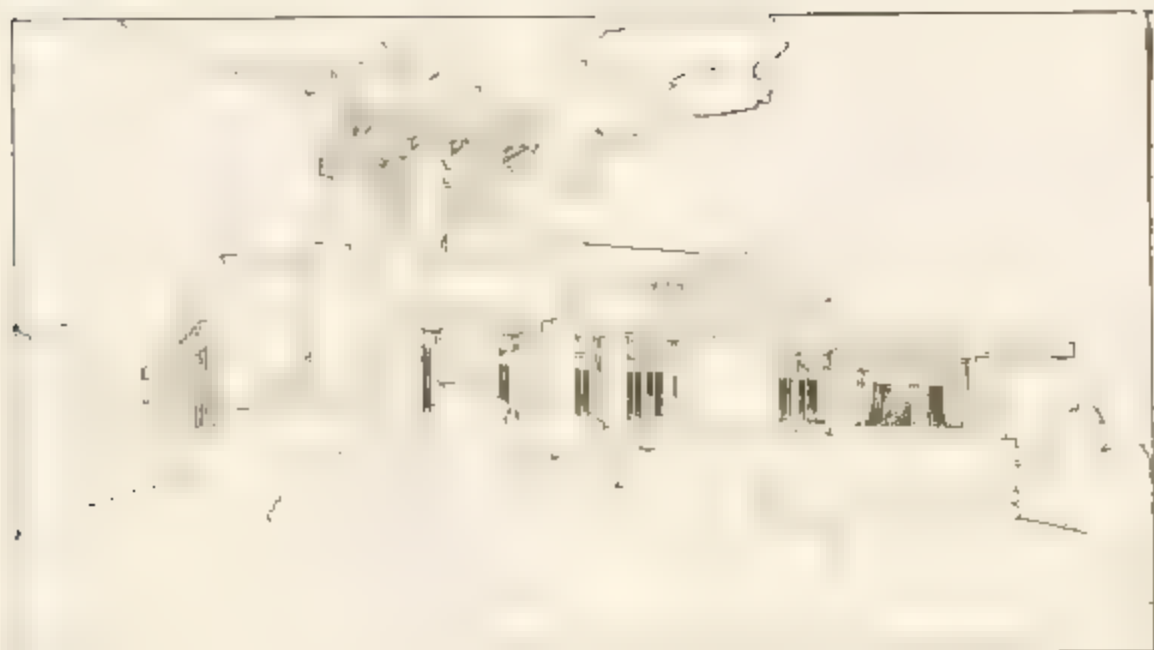
This has been partly due to the unifying and binding power of a common ideal partly to the lead given by Mr and Mrs Griffin and the first house holders and partly to the co-operation necessary for the control and improvement of the semi-private reserves close to each house these being in the hands of a committee of immediate residents. Naturally a friendly rivalry correspondingly stimulates a section camaraderie.



So far as the improvement of the community parks is concerned every lot holder contributes ten shillings a year to a special fund, and thus has a direct personal interest in results.

Generous provision has been made by the Company in connection with the Community Club. Two valuable lots near the entrance to the suburb have been set aside for Club purposes and a most ambitious Club house and theatre combined will be erected. This Club home will be circular and its theatre will have a revolving stage. In the building there will also be a kindergarten, gymnasium, billiard room, library, tea room, dancing floor, orchestra space and a roof garden.

The open air theatres in both scenic suburbs will also advance music, drama and education while serving recreational purposes. Special care has been given to the planning



Castlecrag architecture has struck a distinct bold note in Australia. In place of the high peaked tile roofs—a foolish perpetuation from countries where falls of snow demanded such precautions—the handsome landscape style, with its stone walls and flat roofs, has been introduced, in harmony with the great amphitheatre of stone and forest.

of the area at Covecrag devoted to the future Civic Centre for Local and Educational Institutions, Libraries, Clubs, Theatres, Schools and Churches. It is expected that the fruits of this care will set a standard for every suburb in Greater Sydney.

There are two monumental Shopping Centres provided for Covecrag forming the entrances to the exclusively residential areas from the main traffic artery eighty feet wide, that will lead to the bridge and Sydney.

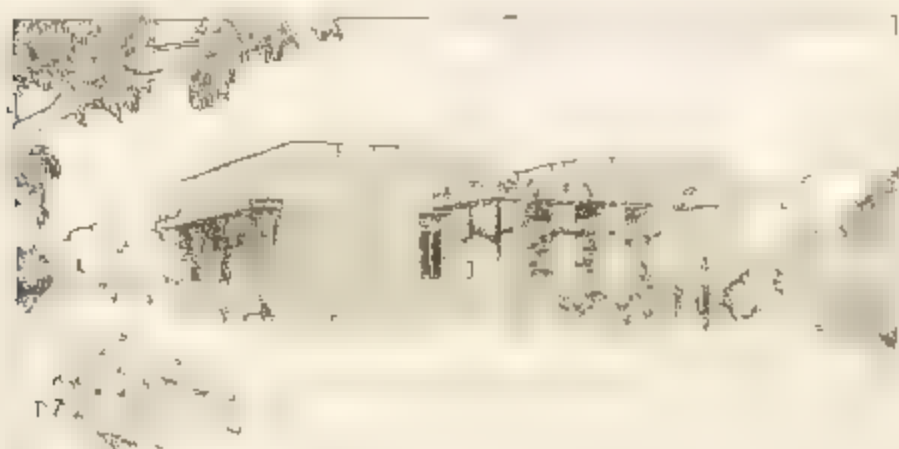
Each will be an architectural unit, the ten or sixteen shops of which it consists conforming to plans which are part of the purchase conditions of the sites.

These entrances will have either a central park or public building encircled by a colonade or galleried promenade supported on massive stone pillars, with effective electric lanterns.

Although the first few houses built to provide needed accommodation were architecturally perfect and so fully suited to blend with the landscape, they cannot fairly be compared with later handsome homes nor with even more ambitious dwellings approved for erection shortly.

But they served three most useful purposes. They proved the absolute suitability and beauty of the sandstone on the estate and justified its stipulation, they pointed the way to the now universal Castlecrag practice of building to obtain the greatest possible living room view of harbor and forest and they introduced wholly delightful labour-saving devices.

Castlecrag buildings are of native sandstone which has been quarried on the estate or taken from the allotment used. The stone is generally rough hewn and random set in massive walls, with windows in batteries protected by overhanging trellises and climbing plants.





The flat concrete roofs which best suit the tiers of cliffs and provide floral terraces or grassy lawns. Many homes are thus to be completely hidden from those above them, and it is literally true in such cases that the whole site is "100 per cent. garden"!

Opportunities with such roofs are endless. They can be used as huge open air rooms with stone "window boxes" on the parapets, or grassed in, or made into flower gardens.

It might reasonably be supposed that the necessarily shadowy space would preclude grass or flowers. But it has been demonstrated at Castlecrag that a thick lawn can be grown on rock with a covering of only eight inches, and there are ripe bananas hanging from trees planted in 6 inches of soil. There are, of course, no frosts on Castlecrag.

Dampness or leakage is impossible with such roofs. Before any roof is considered finished it is put completely under water and converted into a lake for a month, thus ensuring the setting of the concrete and providing an infallible test.

Practically every house has an immense living room with almost the whole of one side in glass, thus utilising the incomparable scenic advantages.

Quarries on the estate provide abundant diversity of stone—white, grey, buff, purple, pink, mottled and striated with combinations. This stone can be hewn, sawn or carved at such moderate expense that extremely lovely homes can be built at no more cost than ordinary brick. The interiors are generally sand finished, with oil or cellulose coverings making a permanent and washable surface.

Novel standardised construction, solid warm wood or cork floors, universal damp insulation, morticeless joinery, fold-down windows and doors, rough wall texture and decorations, overhead ventilation and roofs tightly insulated both for summer and winter protection are a few of the advantages enjoyed by the residents of Castlecrag.

Labour saving ideas are exemplified in the water, gas and electric services in the built-in and ventilated cupboards, built-in wardrobes with full length mirrors in all bedrooms, built-in pass pantry between dining room and kitchen, built-in electric washers, built-in twin sinks and drying racks, clothes clothes drying racks, ash drops, coal air stores, power points for irons and cleaners, hot water service, etc., etc.

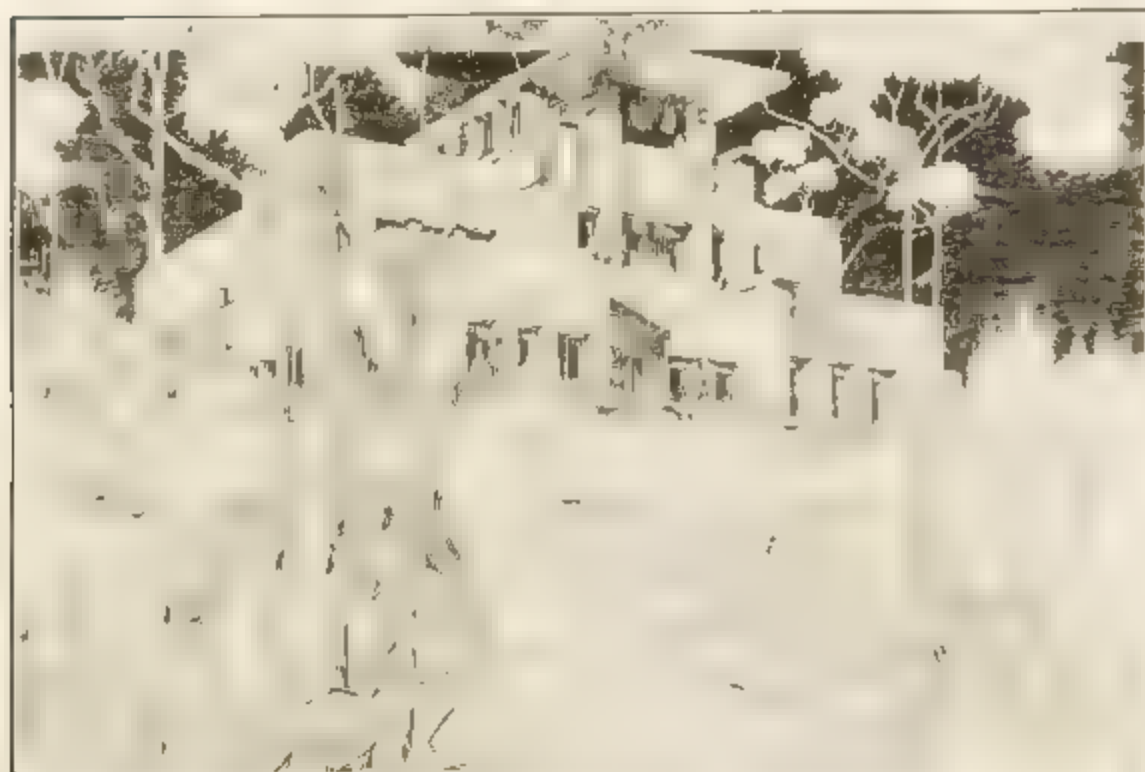




FIGURE 1. THE HOUSES IN THE SUBURB

Other features include indirect lighting, grooves for pictures and the elimination of wood work.

The spaciousness of the suburb is established by the fact that in the densest occupation permitted ranges from only two to three homes per acre.

Individual houses are generally approached by means of a drive way on one side. On the other they face a spacious playground or park or possess an extensive outlook. They are screened from their neighbours by flowering shrubs and climbers, which soon cover and hide the wire boundary fences.

The covenants have been heartily endorsed by the hundreds of purchasers from the Company. They do not encourage uniformity nor do they constitute cost the criterion because that only implies quantity whereas quality is required to effect the highest class residential development and safeguard stability, and this is assured by the stipulation that all the constructional plans be approved by the Company's architect who is its Managing Director, Walter Burley Griffin.

For the seven years preceding this undertaking Director of Design and Construction of the Federal Capital, Canberra. His architectural standard of functional reasonableness and creative individuality has received acknowledgment from all continents and is widely recognised in Australia. The covenants will thus conserve the scenery for the future and assure unobstructed rock, valley and water views.

So far as the future of these scenic marine suburbs is concerned the progress made and the wide interest shown have already ensured success. Four-fifths of the land on Castlecrag has been sold, and the vast majority of buyers intend to put up their own houses as quickly as possible.

When the Harbor Bridge is built both suburbs will be closer than most North Shore resorts to Sydney and far closer in distance and time than other popular and fashionable suburbs.



GLIMPSE OF THE MAIN ARM OF MIDDLE HARBOR

While there is no standard of comparison possible in the Commonwealth, similar developments in the United States have been financially and socially successful—often beyond an expectation. The following are outstanding and famous illustrations.

Forest Hill Gardens, Long Island, Montemont, Cincinnati; Roland Park, Baltimore; Nichols Country Club District, Kansas City; Palos Verdes, Los Angeles; Coral Gables, Miami.

These have become the most exclusive social centres of their cities. It is certain that a similar judgment will be passed on Castlecrag and Covecrag!



A L O N G T H E C O U R T
 A S E R I E S O F S M A L L R O O M S
 A R E A C C E S S I B L E F R O M T H E
 A U T O C E N T R A L H A L L





Studied in conjunction with the photograph on the first page, the sketch plan here reproduced graphically illustrates the proximity of both scenic marine suburbs to the heart of Sydney. They occupy the picked positions on the outskirts of the most closely settled portion of the North Shore.

Recent building returns of six North Shore districts show that 1275 residences were built in one year, and of these by far the largest number, 337, were erected at Willoughby, which includes Covecrag and Castlecrag.

While building sites in far inferior localities in other North Shore districts have been eagerly bought at twice and three times the prices still asked for

land at Covecrag and Castlecrag, the recent opening up of the latter and the quality standards insisted upon have prevented an inrush of speculative builders. With the opening of the Harbor Bridge present opportunities must quickly pass.

It is significant that a few of the early buyers on Castlecrag have already resold at higher rates. While there can be, of course, no restriction on such transactions, the founders of both marine suburbs have kept steadily in view their ideal—the creation of a community of the highest class of genuine home lovers.

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